

The President's Daily Brief

11 November 1969

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Soviet leadership is seriously concerned about the lack of progress in the economy. (Page 1)

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Cambodia has received large rice shipments from China and North Vietnam which appear to be intended for Cambodian consumption and possibly for transshipment to the Viet Cong. (Page 3)

The Soviets have established a new military district opposite China's Sinkiang Province. (Page 4)

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President Podgorny's gloomy national day speech on 7 November reflected the Soviet leadership's concern over the lack of progress in the economy. Podgorny dampened the festiveness of the occasion by admitting that living standards are not rising "as fast as all of us would like" and that labor productivity is lagging.

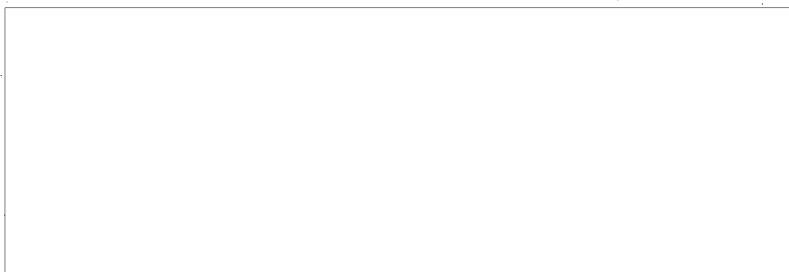
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[redacted] statements reveal the Soviet leaders' considerable preoccupation with economic troubles and their impatience for better results. They do not, however, provide any indication on how the leadership intends to cope with the situation. As the deadlines for enacting the annual and next five-year plans approach, they will be compelled to make hard political decisions on whether they should adopt significant economic reforms.

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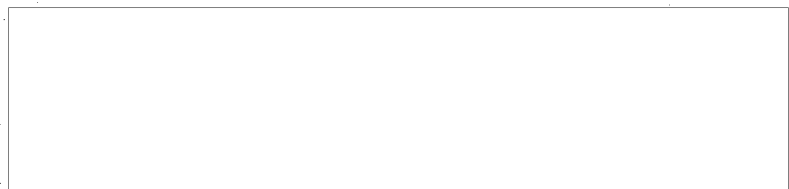
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CAMBODIA-VIETNAM

[redacted] the arrival in Sihanoukville of 4,000 tons of North Vietnamese rice on 28 October and 10,000 tons of Chinese rice the next day. [redacted] the rice is destined for the Viet Cong. [redacted] a second Chinese shipment of 10,000 tons is due in late November.

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[redacted] the deliveries were made under the terms of a trade agreement signed on 25 September by Cambodia and the Viet Cong Provisional Revolutionary Government. The agreement among other things provides for the transshipment through Cambodia of third-country goods destined for the Viet Cong.

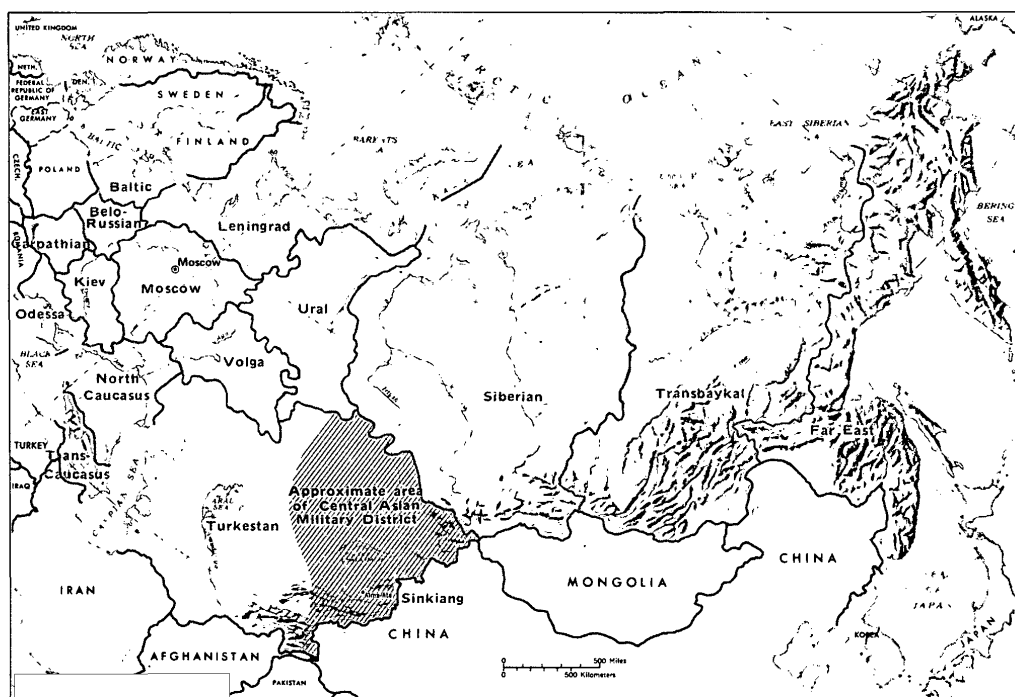
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We doubt that all of this rice is destined for the Communists. For one thing, the amounts said to be involved are high in terms both of the Communists' current need for external rice sources and of their ability to move and store such quantities in such a short time. It may be, however, that the Communists intend to set up larger stockpiles in Cambodia.

Whatever was not shipped to South Vietnam could easily be absorbed by the Cambodian economy. For the first time in recent history there is a rice shortage in Cambodia.

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Soviets Establish New Military District Along Chinese Border



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The Soviets have established a new military district opposite China's Sinkiang Province. Radio and press reports refer to it as the Central Asian Military District. It was carved out of the eastern part of the Turkestan Military District, and its headquarters probably is at Alma Ata.

This administrative restructuring of the Soviet military in the Far East is long overdue. The new district almost certainly was established to improve command and control in an area where the Soviets have more than doubled their forces in the past four years.

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